THE ILLINOIS PLAN

FOR
SPECIAL EDUCATION
OF
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

CHILDREN WHO ARE BLIND

Circular
Series "D"
No. 12
Revised
1960

Issued by
The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
GEORGE T. WILKINS, Superintendent

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No. 12
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Compiled By

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Consultant

SPECIAL EDUCATION
BLIND AND PARTIALLY SEEING

Issued By

GEORGE T. WILKINS
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Springfield

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INTRODUCTION

Special education law in Illinois provides for the education of blind children. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is required by law to make rules and regulations for administering the program at the state level. These regulations become the guide for school districts establishing programs eligible for state reimbursement. This booklet delineates the Illinois Plan for Special Education for the Blind.

Valuable help was given in the preparation of this material by administrators and teachers working with blind children. Special thanks goes to Mrs. Merle Karnes for her invaluable help in the preparation of the final draft. The following assisted in the review and evaluation of the manuscript.

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PHILOSOPHY

The basic philosophy of public school programs for blind children is to stress the normality of the child and at the same time provide for his special needs. Good planning must be done on an individualized basis. Such planning should make provisions for the blind child so that he will have opportunities to grow socially, emotionally, and intellectually with other children of similar age and abilities. He needs an educational program that will enable him to become an independent, self sufficient adult who lives and functions comfortably and adequately in this seeing world. There is no substitute for a good home where the child can live with and be a part of his family. If in addition to a good home situation there is a day school program that meets the special needs of the child, this likely will be the recommended school placement. In instances where the community does not provide a program or the home for some reason cannot cope with the problem of a handicapped child, then a residential placement may be recommended.

The public schools feel that the best possible service must be available for blind children and that it would be an injustice to maintain a program without high standards. Recognizing the grave responsibility of providing a high caliber educational program, schools work with other professional groups to determine the best educational placement for each blind child.

The schools recognize that blind children, like all children, are a cross section of a school population, which means that there will be children with

varying abilities. Blind children are more like than unlike their sighted peers. At the same time, it is understood that blindness intensifies needs and can impose problems that interfere with recognition of true abilities. This knowledge adds to the conviction that each blind child must be given an opportunity to realize his full potentiality by meeting his special needs. This child can work at a level commensurate with his intellectual ability. Blindness is not an insurmountable handicap.

The public schools realize that the child's learning takes place in his total environment and that he needs to be a part of his family and community life. However, recognizing the individual differences of children, the school personnel know that there is need for great flexibility in services and that some blind children may receive greater benefit from a residential placement than from a day school program. Many factors must be considered in planning the most desirable school placement for a child. It is recognized that the parents must play a prominent role in making a decision. Professional personnel, however, can provide parents with pertinent information which will facilitate good planning for the child.

The public schools know that when the community accepts its responsibility for meeting the needs of its blind children, it not only helps the blind child, but also his sighted peers since mutual respect for the individual is fostered best through close everyday association. It knows that these future adults, who will be responsible for the affairs of the community, will have respect for the abilities of people regardless of differences and that both sighted and blind people will reflect a democratic understanding stemming from their common background of worthwhile, cooperative childhood experiences.

When a blind child is given opportunities throughout his school experiences to work and play with his sighted peers, ultimately he should be better equipped to take his place in the sighted world and make his rightful contribution to society. If society does not meet the challenge of promoting full development of this valuable human resource, society will be the loser.

LAW

Illinois has had legal provision for the special education of blind children in local school districts since 1929.

School Code 12: 12-20 sets the legal pattern by which districts may meet the educational needs of blind children. The district carries the responsibility for establishing special services and under the law is the only agency that can be reimbursed.

1. School districts may establish and maintain special schools, classes, and instruction for eligible blind children.

2. School districts meeting legal requirements may be reimbursed by the State the annual sum of $3,000 for each professional worker. A professional worker is interpreted in the program for blind children as the teacher having special training required by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and certified as approved to the employing school by this office, or in cities over 500,000, certified by the Board of Examiners established by Article 34-86 of the School Code.

3. The school district must submit an Application for Conditional Pre-Approval for the program for blind children to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction through the County Superintendent of Schools by the specific date set by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

4. The school district must "keep an accurate, detailed and separate account of all monies paid out by it for the maintenance" of the program.

5. The school district must submit a claim for reimbursement to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction through the County Superintendent of Schools by the specific date set by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

6. Claims duly processed and approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction are certified to the Auditor of Public Accounts who shall draw warrants to be paid through the County Superintendent of Schools.

7. If a child resident of one school district because of his handicap, attends a special program in another school district, his school district of residence shall grant the proper permit, provide necessary transportation and pay to the school district maintaining the special educational facility the per capita cost of educating such child.

READINESS FOR ESTABLISHING SERVICE FOR BLIND CHILDREN

No program should be started for blind children until the school district has a sincere desire to provide adequate educational opportunties for these children and has formulated a program which can be put into action. The school personnel should realize that this means serving all blind children who can possibly profit from an educational program. Frequently the true potential of a blind child cannot be discovered without an extended trial period. Experiences of the child in infancy and early childhood have marked effect upon how well he is able to adjust in a school setting. Study and observation of blind children has shown that often a blind child, who initially makes a poor school adjustment, can be helped through the concerted efforts of professional personnel and parents to make good use of his abilities that originally were not evident. There is no place for hasty judgments in any educational program and this is especially true in a program for blind children. While there are programs for the blind of long standing throughout the country, this is a relatively new service in the day schools. This means that the understanding of these children is more limited than in some other areas of exceptionalities. Diagnostic tools for evaluating psychological development are limited in number and refinement. While great strides have been made in the last few years in developing programs for blind children, educational planning is still in an experimental stage.

The school personnel and community must not be swayed by ineffectual emotional sympathy for the blind child, but rather face the problem of offering a realistic, advantageous educational program. This program must aid in giving a blind child a knowledge of the realities of life, confidence to cope with them, and a realization of his worth as a recognized and accepted member of his peer group who neither expects nor wants pity or elicits unneeded help.

From the moment a good educational program for blind children is being considered, orientation of the general and building staffs of the school district, of the community, and of the parents is required. One of the major goals of this program is to help the child accept his handicap and build upon his strengths. The school administrator should take leadership for effective teamwork and cooperative effort. He is the key person to give direction to the program and encourage good relationship between the special teacher and other staff members. Incorporated in the school plan should be provisions for developing a close working relationship between the school and parents and full utilization of community resources.

THE NEED FOR A PROGRAM

Each school district is responsible for the education of all of its children. When a child is exceptional, the district has the choice of establishing a special service or of arranging to send him to a special program within another district.

Determination for the establishment of local services will be based first upon the number of children within the district and its surrounding area that are in need of a particular special program.

To ascertain the type of service needed it is necessary to know the number, age, and grade range of blind children who may be served. This points to the need for a survey. The census of exceptional children taken through local districts by the Office of the County Superintendent of Schools will be one source of locating children. The regional office of the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Public Welfare can supply information. Other sources that may know about blind children in a given vicinity are doctors, nurses, clinics, school personnel, parents, and community agencies and groups.

ENROLLMENT

Under the law it is necessary for the state to consider the minimum as well as the maximum number of children to be served. In a program for the blind in Illinois, the minimum enrollment is five and the maximum is ten. The itinerant teacher plan must have a minimum enrollment of five but depending upon the individual needs of the children may exceed the maximum of ten.

No departure from the above standard regarding minimum and maximum numbers in programs will be considered valid without written approval from the Division of Special Education of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Before such deviations are made the school system must submit in writing a request for variation in enrollment numbers, giving specific reasons that will warrant approval.

In determining need for variations from these numbers the following factors should be considered:

1. The school population including the surrounding area from which the exceptional children will be drawn
2. The amount of competent administration and supervision of the program
3. The size of the school and availability of regular class space for exceptional children
4. The teacher's ability to handle complex planning for the children

5. The age and grade range of the children the school decides to serve
6. The range of mental ability of the children
7. The policy regarding mid-year promotion
8. The kinds of visual problems represented
9. The additional physical and/or emotional handicapping conditions
10. Each child's readiness for a special program

PROCEDURE FOR ESTABLISHING SERVICE

Once a local school district has determined its need and readiness for starting a program for blind children, it must establish policies and procedure for effective operation.

The Division of Special Education of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction provides consultative help for establishing and operating a program. There are standards that must be met for programs to be eligible for State reimbursement. Therefore, from the inception of its planning the local school district will want to call upon this division. Most school systems will find it advisable to begin a program for blind children by starting with the pre-school and primary age children. This means that a program is established that will naturally grow as the children grow and progress until eventually services are available to all age levels.

In this long range planning there is also a need to plan carefully for that ultimate total program by studying the projected population estimates of school age blind children. Because of the incidence, it is highly essential that enough districts in one geographical area study this problem jointly. Then by careful planning a program will be assured at primary, intermediate, Junior High, and Senior High School levels.

Policy as to age and grade range may differ from one district to another. Since the law allows special education service to be offered from 3 years through

21 years, a pre-school program can be considered. Early identification and admission gives the school personnel an opportunity to work with the child at an early age and also with the parents. This approach facilitates school readiness. It is necessary that school personnel coordinate their efforts with that of Child Welfare or any similar agency working with the family. In this program it is hoped that by the time the child is ready for academic learning, a firm groundwork has been laid and he can advance with his sighted peers without problems of adjustments to school.

In areas where there are resources for helping parents of pre-school blind children and where these youngsters have an opportunity to attend sighted nursery schools, the local school may feel that its service should begin at the same level as it does for all of its other children. Some schools may feel that in addition to actual age, they must consider the child's ability to care for his own personal needs to the same extent as that required of the seeing children.

Most schools decide to limit enrollment in beginning programs to kindergarten through fourth grade, and as the children progress expand the service to all grade levels.

The type of educational program to be established must be determined after evaluating the various plans and deciding which best fits a particular school district and which insures the best results.

High on the priority list in planning should be locating and employing a teacher who can work successfully in the local setting and who also meets the state qualifications required of a teacher of blind children. The district must provide adequate physical facilities that will vary according to the kind of pro-

gram it decides to establish. Since the delivery of equipment and supplies is slow, anticipation of needs should be an early consideration in planning.

Policies regarding transfers and releases, record keeping, home-school cooperation, and other procedures must be set. Logical steps for program planning will be found in the appendix.

All of the foregoing implies that an early decision must be made as to who will be responsible for administering this special program. The superintendent of schools may take this responsibility or may delegate it to another administrator on his staff. If there is a director of special education, of course, it is a part of his responsibility.

ELIGIBILITY AND PLACEMENT OF BLIND CHILDREN

Children whose visual acuity in the better eye is 20/200 or less after proper refraction, or children who have evidence of a limitation in the field of vision so great as to approximate a handicap equal to the foregoing, are legally blind. Since this definition does not take into consideration the child's ability to use the vision that he has, many legally blind children can still function as seeing children and be educated in programs for the partially seeing.

In offering a program for blind children the local school district must consider those children who fall into the definition of educational blindess. These are the children with vision too low to be used as the chief channel of learning. They must substitute touch, hearing, and other senses for sight; use braille instead of ink print; and master the various tools and techniques designed for the blind person.

Eligibility of children for programs rests upon (1) age, which under the law may be from 3 years through 21 years; (2) the ocular report; (3) psychological evaluation; and (4) other pertinent information.

The school must determine its policy for the age range to be served. It must have and keep on file an ocular report made by the child's attending ophthalmologist or certified optometrist (one who secures ophthalmological consultation when the eye condition indicates that this is necessary). Before enrollment all blind children five years of age or older who have not

had previous school experience must have a psychological evaluation by a qualified psychological examiner who is recognized by the state as being competent to test blind children.

If a school does not have its own psychologist who meets these requirements, the director of special education should contact the state consultant for the blind and seek her assistance in arranging for such service. Following the psychological evaluation and prior to the child's enrollment in the program, a case conference must be held. Participants in the conference should include those people who have a responsibility for the child's educational plan.

Each child is originally admitted to the program on a trial basis and must be re-staffed at the close of the school year to determine future planning. In some cases there may be indications that a child should be continued in the program on a trial basis beyond the first year.

For children who have had school experience, a detailed case conference may be substituted for the psychological evaluation. This case conference must give due consideration to school and medical reports, developmental history, social history, and other information obtained from parents. Also, reports from any agencies that may have worked with the child and his family should be included. A psychological case study, however, is important for any child whose intellectual capacity to benefit from instruction is questionable or for any child who presents behavior problems or evidence of personality disturbance.

A total medical evaluation is valuable for all blind children. For the blind child who has serious health or emotional problems it is essential if all factors are to be assessed.

ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

Administration and supervision of a program for blind children involves a divided responsibility and at the same time the cooperative planning of the State Department of Public Instruction and the local school district. Desired goals can be accomplished when there is a close working relationship. A program will be strengthened by an understanding of the individual responsibilities of each and of the potential of each for serving the program. If, in addition, they draw upon related resources within the local community and the state, the blind child and his family should receive as complete an integrated service as possible.

STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

The state has the responsibility for over-all supervision in administering the law. This includes the following:

I. ESTABLISHING STANDARDS

It is the responsibility of the State Department of Public Instruction to interpret the law and set standards that will insure high quality service to blind children. School systems that wish to apply for reimbursement must adhere to these standards.

II. DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF NEED

The State Department through contacts with various agencies and its access to widespread information such as the state census

on exceptional children often has information regarding the location of blind children in a given vicinity. By bringing such information to the attention of the local school systems, parents, and the community cooperative planning can be facilitated.

Since developing facilities and programs for the blind entails much pre-planning, it is imperative that school districts are aware of the need to lay the proper ground work well in advance of the time when these children will need a school program.

III. INITIATING AND DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

The state has a responsibility to assist school districts in initiating a program. The State can provide information regarding the educational needs of blind children that will assist the school district in developing a sound philosophy for educating these children. This is the first essential step in planning.

The school district must be fully cognizant of the problems involved in setting up a program for blind children. Here the state consultant can be helpful in interpreting the needs of these children and the various organizational plans to consider. Then the district with the help of this consultant, can choose the plan that best fits its needs.

Some of the crucial considerations and decisions that must be made in the early stages of initiating a program are:

A. Adequate physical facilities

Depending upon the type of organizational plan, the school dis-

trict must have necessary space allotted for the program. The state consultant can interpret desirable housing standards.

B. Employment of a fully qualified teacher

The state consultant can provide information regarding teacher training institutions offering training for the blind. She may have knowledge of available qualified teachers that the district can contact and she must evaluate each teacher's transcripts to certify her to school districts under 500,000 as qualified for this special field.

C. Provisions for equipment, materials, and supplies

Information regarding equipment, materials, and supplies can be obtained from the state consultant.

D. Interpretation of Program

Although a good readiness program has been developed all school personnel, parents, and the community must have careful interpretation of the program that is to be offered to insure full cooperation and support of the service for blind children. The State can offer direct and consultative service for this interpretation.

IV. PROVIDING CONSULTATIVE SERVICE FOR AN ON-GOING PROGRAM

A. General

The state provides certain services to all programs for the blind such as: setting up workshops for teachers; distributing information regarding new methods and techniques of instruction, equipment and materials, educational and medical research findings, notices of professional meetings, and new literature.

B. Direct

The State consults with local school personnel regarding ways and means of improving the program such as:

1. Re-evaluation of the program which should result in plans for improvement of services and record keeping.
2. Consideration of problems of an individual child and planning improved ways of meeting his need. This implies that there must be a systematic plan for re-evaluating and staffing children in the program.
3. Recommendations for needed equipment and supplies and guidance in reporting and utilizing the quota from Federal funds.

4. Better utilization of community resources.
5. Improved ways of working with parents.
6. Encouragement of professional growth through attendance at professional meetings, visitation to other programs, professional reading, professional writing, research, enrollment in college and university courses.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The local school district has the responsibility for providing direct service to blind children. It must initiate, administer, and supervise the program. When a school district starts a program for the blind, the cooperative effort and understanding of the school personnel in the area of administration, service, and physical facilities is imperative. The local board of education has the responsibility not only of understanding the over-all program for the blind but also of interpreting the program to the community. It is especially important that the school personnel and the board develop among parents an understanding and acceptance of an educational program for blind children in the public day schools.

The school board can take action regarding the initiation of a program for the blind when the school administrator makes recommendations based upon verifiable facts gathered during the pre-planning period.

The responsibility for the over-all administration, supervision, and coordination of a program for the blind must be delegated, of necessity, to one person. The superintendent of schools may take this responsibility or assign it to another administrator on the staff. Where there is a director of special education this automatically becomes his responsibility.

If the superintendent does not take direct responsibility, he will need to point out lines of authority so that all services within the school system will be accessible to the program. The superintendent will

provide the leadership and support that will inspire the confidence of his whole school staff and the community in developing a good educational program for blind children.

The director of special education or designated administrator, who will be referred to hereinafter as the director, has the over-all responsibility for the administration of the program. Such responsibilities are:

I. PRE-PLANNING FOR A PROGRAM

A. Identifying blind children

It is the responsibility of the director of special education to conduct a continuous survey of exceptional children in a vicinity and to make such information known to the board and superintendent as well as to interpret present and future needs for educational programs.

Collecting information about blind children entails a close working relationship with state and community agencies, school personnel, the medical profession, and with parents. It is particularly important that the director and state consultant work closely together in sharing information regarding children who are moving from one vicinity to another. In some instances parents write to the state for information about available educational programs. The State Department of Public Welfare's Division of Child Welfare provides a service to parents of preschool and school age blind children. The State consultant is kept informed about children who are being served by

this agency. Other state departments also share certain information regarding blind children.

The next step is determining which children can be served. There will be need for a thorough investigation of each individual child who has been reported as blind. This will involve a conference with parents, obtaining medical information including an ocular report, reports from other agencies and from clinics, and educational reports if the child has had previous school experience.

Before initiating a program for blind children some very basic information must be gathered regarding age range, multiplicity of handicaps, desire of parents to have the child live at home and attend a day program, and feasibility of transportation.

B. Developing a philosophy

If a school system has a philosophy that recognizes individual differences it should not be difficult to incorporate into this philosophy plans for meeting the needs of blind children.

C. Studying organizational plans

There are various organizational plans in use nation-wide for the education of blind children. A school district considering making provisions for blind children should acquaint itself with these and weigh the strengths and weaknesses of each in reference to the local situation. The additional planning hinges, to some

extent, upon the plan chosen by the local district. For example, a special class requires more space than a resource room. It would be well to call upon the state consultant for interpretation and recommendations.

D. Determining advisability of initiating a program

Even when sufficient data has been gathered to verify the need for a program, such matters as the following must be considered carefully before a program is initiated.

1. Availability of space

Until adequate housing can be provided a school system is not ready to initiate a program. Sub-standard housing may promote a sub-standard program.

2. Locating a qualified teacher

A certified teacher of blind children is required by law if a program is under the Illinois plan. A teacher may meet the training requirements but not be qualified to work in a specific program in a particular school system. The first year a program is started is a very crucial one. Personal qualifications as well as training requirements are always important considerations to weigh. In the early stages of development an educational program for blind children in a school that has had no previous experience and where the philosophy is to integrate children in the regular school

program, choosing a teacher who has a pleasing personality and can get along amicably with her co-workers is of paramount importance.

It is often wise during this period of teacher shortage in this specialized area, for a school system to interest a successful regular classroom teacher in becoming a qualified teacher of the blind, thus delaying the opening of the program until her training has been completed. Long range planning and recruitment of personnel in advance, however, will enable school systems to cope better with the problem of teacher shortage and thus not delay services to children.

3. Budget considerations

There is need for a realistic estimation of what a program will cost. If it meets state standards a school system can anticipate financial reimbursement of $3,000 for each professional worker in the program and half of the cost of transportation for each child up to $400. The school district must be prepared to meet the additional cost of establishing and maintaining the service.

The special equipment and materials of instruction needed for this program are essential and costly. The school system is not ready to initiate a program until its budget can allow for such expenditures.

4. Evaluation of the school and community readiness to start a program

A sound readiness program for developing an understanding and acceptance of the responsibility for educating blind children cannot be left to chance. It must be developed over a period of time involving both the school personnel and the community.

II. INITIATING A PROGRAM

After the school district has made the decision to provide educational opportunities for blind children, the director has the responsibility for giving the necessary leadership and guidance for starting the program. These responsibilities include:

A. Recommendation for employing a certified and qualified teacher

Hopefully during the pre-planning period the director will have interviewed teachers of the blind and will be ready to make recommendation to the superintendent for the employment of a teacher. The director will, of course, have made certain that the teacher meets state training qualifications.

B. Developing readiness in the school buildwhere the program is to be located

While considerable readiness has been developed in the school system and the community there needs to be an even more intensive readiness within the particular setting for the program. The director and principal should plan ways and means of developing an understand-

ing and acceptance of this program among the staff of the school, the children, and the parents. The state consultant can be called upon to help them in this planning. In addition to having meetings to interpret the needs of blind children and means of providing an educational program in a public day school, visitations to existing programs and viewing films gives regular teachers an insight. When the teachers have gained this background they can participate in the planning for the work within their own school. Regular teachers have a real contribution to make in the education of these children and in interpreting the program to other pupils.

It is important for the blind child's peers to understand and accept him. To insure good understanding the school staff with the assistance of the director should plan ways of acquainting the children with the abilities as well as the limitations of a blind child. The seeing child needs to encourage the blind child to be as independent as possible. On the other hand, this seeing child should recognize his opportunities to give needed help.

The success of the program is dependent to a large extent upon the acceptance of parents whose children attend the school. The P.T.A. president and other officers can be solicited to help interpret the service. Possibly a P.T.A. program could be planned for this purpose. A full understanding, however, entails continu-

ous interpretation. A realization of how blind children can be educated in such a school cannot be acquired until parents have had an opportunity to know and observe blind children in the school setting.

C. Providing psychological services

Prior to enrollment in a program all blind children five years of age or older who have not had grade school experience must have a psychological evaluation by a qualified psychological examiner experienced in working with blind children. It is the responsibility of the director to see that the children receive this service.

D. Holding case conferences

To enable the school to plan an adequate educational program for each child a case conference should be held prior to his admittance to the program. The director of special education has a responsibility together with the principal for setting up these conferences. Special and regular staff members who will be working with the child should be included at the conference. There will be times when representatives from agencies having information to contribute, will be invited to participate.

The director has the responsibility of presiding at these conferences and seeing that specific decisions are made and responsibilities delineated. The director should arrange for the recording of pertinent information, especially that pertaining to recommendations, decisions,

and the delegation of responsibilities. The director and principal are responsible for the implementation of recommendations and decisions and will call additional conferences as need arises.

All blind children originally are admitted to a program on a trial basis. At the end of the first year the director must arrange for a psychological re-evaluation and subsequent case conference for each child.

E. Providing adequate housing

The director will work with the principal to see that the room assigned for this program affords the needed space and meets the state standards for proper housing.

F. Working with other districts

The director of special education where the program for the blind is maintained must make necessary arrangements with any school district that is to send a child to the program. This involves obtaining a signed agreement from the child's home district that when billed, it will pay the per capita cost for educating the blind child. It may be necessary for the director to explain to the participating district that responsibility for the child's transportation rests with the home district.

Arrangements should be made between the two districts for a sharing of information about the child and a planning of ways to meet his needs.

G. Providing transportation for children living within the district

The director must work with the principal and other school personnel who are responsible for transportation so that the most efficient and economical plan can be arranged that will meet state requirements.

H. Completing state forms and maintaining adequate records

The director is responsible for completing all state forms and submitting them to the superintendent of schools for review and signature in time for them to reach the State Department of Public Instruction by the date specified on the form.

Certain records must be kept throughout the year to enable the director to complete forms and make reports. Each school system must develop a system of record keeping to meet its needs.

The director must also help the teacher set up and maintain meaningful records which will include anecdotal records and summaries of parent-teacher conferences.

I. Developing a parent education program

The director recognizes that it is extremely important for teachers and parents to have a close working relationship and establish compatible goals for helping the child develop his optimum potentials. Therefore, the director must see that plans are executed for developing and maintaining a high level teacher-parent cooperation.

J. Utilizing community resources

The director must be aware of all available resources in the community and state that offer services to blind children. He should see that these resources are fully utilized. In addition, the director should develop and encourage additional resources such as individuals or groups who could become volunteer braillists or give reader service.

III. IMPROVING AND EXPANDING A PROGRAM

A. Administration and supervision of the program

1. Teacher assignment

It is the director's responsibility to assign teachers to work with children of age levels compatible with the teacher's training, experience, and interest. Placement of children with teachers is made by the director with the help of the principal and other school personnel, taking into consideration such factors as the number of children to be served, age and grade range, and the multiplicity of handicaps.

2. In-service training

In programs where there is more than one teacher of the blind, regular scheduled monthly in-service training meetings of teachers should be held with the director. Where there are both programs for the partially seeing and for the blind there are times when it will be advantageous for the teach-

ers from the two areas to meet together to discuss common problems. These two groups need to have a good understanding of both programs since there are children with border line vision whose placement may have to be shifted from one program to the other.

To encourage the development of leadership and to insure that the problems discussed at such meetings are really the problems that the teachers consider important, many directors feel that these meetings should be chaired by a teacher elected by the group. Depending upon the size of the group there also may be a need for a person to serve as program chairman. These programs should be planned well in advance of the meeting so that teachers can attend prepared to participate in the discussion. There should be periodic evaluation of such meetings to make sure that they are worthwhile.

In districts where there is only one teacher of blind children the director should schedule a regular monthly conference in lieu of the group in-service training meeting. This does not preclude any other type of conference that might be held with the teacher during the course of the month. The nature of the regular monthly conference can be somewhat comparable to that of a larger group meeting.

Other techniques of in-service training for which the director can provide are:

a. Case conferences

One of the best techniques is the case conference. The teacher has an opportunity to share information with various disciplines thus gaining a better understanding of a particular blind child and of all blind children.

b. Visitation

It is important for the director to arrange for the teacher to visit regular classrooms where blind children are enrolled. It is also helpful to visit programs for the blind in other school districts. The director and principal, with the help of the state consultant, can select programs that will be of the most help to the particular teacher. The director should help prepare the teacher for the visitation so that she will profit to the greatest extent. Arrangements should be made also for the sharing of the information gained by the teacher when she returns from the visit.

c. Professional reading

Professional literature about the blind should be made available to the staff by the director. Outstanding articles should be called to the attention of the teachers by

the director who also should see that the budget allows for the purchase of professional publications.

d. Research and professional writing

The director should encourage the teachers to identify problems that need to be studied through experimentation and research and give assistance in carrying on such activities in the classroom. The director should likewise help teachers interpret research findings and make use of such knowledge in improving the instructional program for blind children.

Teachers should be encouraged to write up their experiments, experiences, and ideas.

e. Other techniques

Teachers of the blind need to have a broad perspective of general education. Therefore, they should be encouraged to attend meetings of regular education and general meetings of special education. They should also be given an opportunity to serve on committees that cut across levels and in specialized areas.

The director should encourage the teachers to participate on programs and should make provisions in the budget for them to attend some professional meetings outside the local school district.

3. Improvement of record keeping

The teacher must be given the necessary help in setting up and maintaining meaningful records. She may need help from the director in determining what kinds of information should be recorded and how to record it. She also may need help in differentiating the type of material that should be kept in a cumulative record and material of a more confidential nature.

The director will want to make sure that the teacher understands and keeps certain information which will be needed for preparation of state reports.

4. Placement, transfer, and dismissal of pupils in the program

The placement, transfer, and dismissal of blind children is based upon a careful study made by the director and all other persons involved in the program. The final responsibility for a decision, of course, rests with the director.

5. Utlization of school and community resources

The director helps the teacher identify the problems of children who are in need of additional special services and assists her in making referral to the proper person. The director also makes known to the teacher the community resources available to

blind children and helps her work out plans for the utilization of these services.

The director will seek the help of other administrators in the school to improve the instructional program for blind children.

6. Provision for needed equipment and materials of instruction

The director and teacher will work closely together to assure provision of needed equipment and materials. The teacher should be involved in developing a budget for her specialized area.

It must be recognized from the onset that long range planning for the blind is of paramount importance. Textbooks that cannot be purchased in braille of necessity, must be hand transcribed. This means that brailling such materials should be started at least a year in advance of the time that they will be needed.

7. Utilization of volunteer help

It is particularly important in this specialized area for the director to make plans for training baillists in the community. It is unrealistic to expect a teacher to braille all needed material and only a limited amount can be purchased commercially. The director must recognize that an extensive program of volunteer service of this type will require many more braille writers than are actually needed for the use of the children in the program.

Volunteers also may be used advantageously in the special room. If teacher assistants are used, care must be taken to define the role of the assistant and to orient these lay persons before they start working in the program. The director must take active part in this volunteer program.

B. Establishing and maintaining relationships in the community

1. Work with professional groups

The director must work with agencies, clinics, and personnel of the medical profession to establish policies and procedures for sharing information. This will mean that he must be responsible for interpreting the services to blind children within the school and the kinds of information that are needed by the school for gaining a better understanding of blind children. Also, the director will need to be familiar with the functions of the various agencies and specifically of the services that are offered to blind children.

2. Interpretation of the program to the community

The director should take advantage of opportunities to arrange for programs that will interpret the educational services for blind children to community groups. Good planning is important in developing understanding, support, and acceptance of the program.

The director will wish to use various media for a good interpretation of the program for the blind. Any publicity must be routed through the administrator in charge of the program to safeguard the program and to protect blind children from exploitation.

IV. EXPANSION OF PROGRAM

When a school system initiates a program it must engage immediately in long range planning. Initiation of a program implies an on-going service that will allow the child to complete his public school education. Future planning should include not only the children in the current program but those who will enter. Anticipated increase in enrollment will help the district meet needs as they arise.

Long range planning must take into consideration the following factors:

A. Increased personnel

Consideration must be given to expanding needed service. This may involve employment of additional personnel.

B. Housing

When new buildings are being planned it may be well to incorporate into the plans housing for a program for the blind. If needs are not anticipated there is a possibility that when blind children are in a program at the secondary level, for example, no space will be available for them.

C. Equipment and materials

Equipment and materials should be ordered well in advance of the time that they will be needed by the blind children.

D. Volunteer help

As the program expands the need for volunteer help increases. Programs at the upper elementary and at the secondary levels require much more braille and other materials than those at the lower levels. Much of this material can be reproduced by volunteers.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

The special teacher will have great influence upon the success of the program. Therefore, it is important to make a careful selection in the employment of this key person. An administrator will do well to consider far more than the professional qualifications of the person whom he chooses to work with blind children. Experience in teaching sighted children will be a great asset to a teacher of the blind.

A thorough investigation of an applicant should be made before a contract is offered. This will involve obtaining confidential letters of recommendation and personal interview. The administrator will wish to investigate personal qualities of the applicant as well as special training. She should have sound physical and mental health, qualities of adaptability, good judgment, and ability to work with others. She must be reliable, resourceful, creative, and perceptive in order that she will have a good understanding of the problems of the children and their teachers with whom she works. She must be willing to put the welfare of children above consideration of expenditure of her time and energy. It is important, however, to remember that the special teacher cannot be all things to all children. A potentially strong teacher of blind children is a stronger teacher when she is considered as one person of several that are primarily concerned with the program. There are functions of direction and interpretation that need the competencies of the principal. Other offerings by such staff members as the nurse, regular teacher, psychologist, and school social worker may be the difference between a strong functioning or mediocre program.

The complete transcript of credits of a teacher of blind children must be evaluated by the Division of Special Education of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and before employment, approval granted to the school in which she is to teach, if the school is to receive State reimbursement for the special program, except in cities of over 500,000 where the evaluation is made by a Board of Examiners as provided by law, Article 34-86 of the School Code.

Every teacher in the public schools of Illinois must hold a valid Illinois Teacher's Certificate, or a certificate of the Board of Examiners in cities of over 500,000, for the grade level or levels at which she is to teach. The following requirements for approval in the special field may be included in the courses needed for certification or taken in addition to them.

REQUIRED BACKGROUND COURSES FOR BLIND:
15 Semester Hours

1. Child Growth and Development
2. Mental Hygiene
3. Survey of Education for Exception Children
   or
   Psychology of Exceptional Children
4. Pupil Evaluation
5. Laboratory work with Children with Severe Reading Disability

REQUIRED COURSES FOR BLIND:
9-12 Semester Hours

1. Hygiene and Physiology of the Eye
2. Methods, Curriculum Adaptation and/or Program Adjustment
3. Techniques of Braille Reading and Writing

4. Practice teaching with the blind
5. Course in typing or demonstrated proficiency in typing

ELECTIVE COURSES FOR THE BLIND:
16-18 Semester Hours

1. Nutrition
2. Speech Correction
3. Music for Children
4. Vocational Rehabilitation
5. Arts and Crafts
6. Related courses in Education, Psychology, and Sociology (not to exceed 8 semester hours)

Total Semester Hours 38-43

EDUCATIONAL PLANS

There are three organizational plans that local public schools may use to provide programs for the education of blind children. All three use an individualized approach to meet the needs of blind children and integrate them with their sighted peers. These plans are defined as follows:

THE SPECIAL CLASS PLAN, sometimes called the cooperative plan, is one in which the blind child is enrolled in a special room from which he goes to the regular grade for a portion of his work as arranged by the fully qualified special teacher in cooperation with the classroom teachers.

THE RESOURCE ROOM PLAN, often called the integrated plan, enrolls the blind child in his regular grade and provides a full time qualified special teacher and a resource room to help him and his classroom teacher to compensate for his lack of sight.

THE ITINERANT TEACHER PLAN leaves the blind child in his home school and meets his needs through the cooperative effort of the classroom teacher and a fully qualified special itinerant teacher.

SPECIAL CLASS AND RESOURCE ROOM PLANS

The special room programs were started in public schools when services were first offered. In many systems that have had services for blind children for a number of years this kind of program has served very effectively. When the philosophy of schools began stressing meeting the needs of individual chil-

dren, schools started arranging for the blind child to participate more in the regular school program. The resource room plan, a variation of the special room plan, insures the blind child a fuller participation in the over-all school program. This plan is recommended by the State as preferable to the special room plan for programs being initiated now.

BUILDING—In both the special class and resource room plans, the special service is established in a building within the system where certain factors have been given careful consideration. The school should be geographically located to be accessible to the greatest number of blind children to be served. It should serve sighted children of the same grade levels and have a sufficient enrollment to insure the inclusion of blind students with sighted non-handicapped children without the necessity for placing too many blind students in any one classroom. Most important of all, it should be a school interested in the welfare of children and desirous of meeting their individual needs. This necessitates a permissive and accepting attitude on the part of the principal and teachers.

ROOM—The room selected for special use must be adequate for teaching and for conferences with children, other school personnel, and parents. Sufficient space is needed to house the necessary heavy and often cumbersome equipment and supplies and still allow the blind child to move about with ease. The resource room may be large enough to accommodate only two or three children at a time, plus necessary supplies and equipment. A special room plan, however, will require a full size classroom since there will be more children using it at the same time. The same specifications for safety and health as those required for all children should be observed. Good

lighting is essential since some of the blind children will have residual vision and should be helped to use to the best possible advantage what little they have. Rooms should have a minimum of fifty foot candles of evenly distributed light without glare.

THE ITINERANT TEACHER PLAN

The itinerant teacher plan requires greater responsibility on the part of classroom teachers because the special teacher will be working in a number of buildings and will not be immediately available at all times. This plan is quite different from the two previously described.

ENROLLMENT—The maximum number of blind children with whom an itinerant teacher can work will vary. It is wise to start with a small group and add other children to the program when it becomes possible to give them adequate service. In determining the itinerant teacher's case load, the following factors must be considered.

1. The number and location of the schools in which she must work
2. The amount of time that will be needed with each child based upon his age, ability, adjustment, maturity, and need for special instruction in addition to the instruction received with the other children in the regular classroom
3. Means of transportation used by the special teacher
4. The amount of material that will need to be prepared by the special teacher or other individuals

5. Provision and/or availability of reader service

6. Availability of volunteer service

INSTRUCTION AND SCHEDULING—As with the other types of services, in this one, the blind child will receive the same education that is designed for all of the children in his school district. The itinerant teacher will work with him as much as is necessary to help him function independently in his regular classroom. She will guard against fostering a dependence upon her and will encourage his identification with his classroom teacher. It must be remembered that the itinerant teacher's role is to supplement the work of the classroom teacher, provide individualized instruction for the blind child, and furnish necessary supplies and equipment that will enable him to function with his seeing classmates. This means that she must work closely and cooperatively with the classroom teachers, other school personnel, and the parents.

The young blind children, particularly when learning to read and write braille, will require more of the itinerant teacher's time than will older children. Each child's need must be carefully evaluated and the program adjusted to insure his chance of functioning to capacity. Some children may not require specialized help more than a few times a week, while others may need intensive help each day.

The itinerant teacher must not leave anything to chance, but must be sure that the child is progressing as he should. She must observe the child in the classroom, hold conferences with the classroom teacher and parents, tactfully offer necessary suggestions, and stimulate interest and understanding. She must use the proper administrative channels and have a knowledge of the philosophy and curriculum of each

school system in which she works, so that she can foster a high degree of resourcefulness and confidence on the part of the classroom teacher and other school personnel who deal with the blind child.

HOUSING—Housing problems for this kind of program are quite different from those for the other types. Suitable physical space must be available in each school in which the special teacher works. This may be any small room that affords uninterrupted privacy, adequate lighting, and ventilation and meets the necessary health and safety requirements.

An adequate office with adjoining storage space, large enough to house all of the supplies and equipment necessary for the children she serves, is essential. This is the home base she must have for preparing materials, planning her work, holding conferences, and writing and filing her records.

EQUIPMENT FOR PROGRAMS

The same supplies and equipment must be considered for any kind of educational program although the itinerant teacher plan will concentrate almost entirely upon the materials and equipment designed primarily for the blind.

Selection of school equipment and supplies of a general nature that can be used effectively by both sighted and blind children should be made. In addition, equipment and supplies designed specifically for the use of the blind child will be needed since he must have those things that will help him function effectively in his educational program.

Braille Needs For Blind Children

Blind children are taught by the braille system of reading and writing which, with variations, has

been in use since 1829. It represents letters and figures by raised dots. Each character is formed by using one or more dots from an arrangement of the braille cell that is two dots wide and three high, with each dot having its own number. By means of the combinations of the dots within this cell, the blind individual can read and write the equivalent of inkprint characters. To increase speed and ease of reading and writing each letter within a word is not necessarily spelled out, rather certain dots may form a contraction to stand for a word or portion thereof. The child is taught to read by running his finger over the dots. As he develops a proficiency and skill in the use of braille, he can function at a favorable level with his sighted peers even though this reading method, of necessity, is slower than reading inkprint.

For the blind child in the public school the most important one item is material in braille to correspond with that in inkprint for the sighted children at the same grade level. Some of this will be available commercially and, whether it is or not, it will be the responsibility of the local school district and the special teacher in particular, to provide this as the need arises. Some may be done by the special teacher, some will be transcribed by volunteer braillists, and some may be borrowed from the hand transcribed libraries in other schools. Reproduction of hand transcribed materials also may be purchased from the American Printing House for the Blind.

Reproducers for Programs for the Blind

Even with the above resources it will not be possible to have everything in braille at the time that it is needed. For this reason, and because children need to learn through listening, some of their material will be presented to them on the Talking Book or other

type of recording. A Talking Book should be provided for each program and the school avail itself of the wealth of useful Talking Book recordings. A tape recorder or other recording device that can be used by the teacher and/or by a paid or volunteer reader is needed so that materials not available on Talking Book records or in braille may be prepared ahead of time or at the immediate time of need. As it is in regular classrooms, this machine will be used to improve speech, help in reading, and at times for pleasure. A record player should be provided as well since some commercial records not designed specifically for the blind meet certain needs. The tape recorder will be used in the same way as it would be in a regular classroom. All three of these machines mentioned should be equipped with jacks and earphones so that one or several children may listen without disturbing the others who may be near them.

Writing Needs for Blind Children

Next in priority to reading materials is that of writing equipment.

THE BRAILLEWRITER is recommended for all beginners and when possible one should be provided for each child. Until such time as the desired number can be obtained arrangements must be made for each child to have easy access to one. This machine, somewhat similar to a typewriter, has a keyboard containing six keys and a space bar.

THE BRAILLE SLATE AND STYLUS, another kind of needed equipment, is a device for writing braille by hand. After the child has become proficient with the braille writer he should be taught with this method since the slate and stylus will be easier to carry about and of great help in certain situations. The slate is made of a two-layer metal frame and serves as a guide

for dot placement. The top layer has four lines of holes outlining the individual braille cells that match the indentations in the bottom layer. Paper is placed between the layers and the individual uses a pointed metal punch, called a stylus, to punch down to form the dots. This means that before reading, the paper must be turned over. Therefore, the writing must be done from right to left rather than in the usual direction used for inkprint and script.

For writing braille in either manner a tough heavy paper is needed. Many local agencies can supply braille paper or it may be ordered from those places supplying materials and equipment for the blind. (See appendix)

A TYPEWRITER enables the blind child to write in a manner easily read by his classroom teacher and other sighted friends. Many of his lessons may be prepared on it after he gains proficiency in its use. For this reason the teaching of typing is started earlier than it is for sighted children and the school must provide standard model typewriters in sufficient number to meet the need of the blind pupils.

Other Materials and Equipment for Programs for Blind Children

Furniture required will include sturdy desks with tops large enough to accommodate a braillewriter and still leave work space; book cases that will hold the large books satisfactorily; tables, preferably on rollers for such machines as the Talking Book and others mentioned; and tables and chairs suitable for the age children who will be using them.

Many other items will be necessary, depending upon the age and grade range of pupils served. These will include maps, globes, models, mathematical de-

vices, and others. Through conference with the special teacher the administrator can determine which should be provided at a given time.

(See appendix for list of equipment and supplies.)

PROVISION FOR BLIND CHILDREN NOT ENROLLED IN PROGRAMS PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED

There are times when a blind child who has acquired the tools and techniques necessary for the blind can go to a public school not offering special services. In such a case the school should be responsible for helping the child obtain braille and/or recorded books and reader service that he may need. When the school does not offer a special program, reimbursement for reader service may be obtained through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction by establishing the child's eligibility for it, then filing an Application for Conditional Pre-Approval for Reader Service and, if approved, a Claim for Reimbursement at the end of the school year.

Federal quota for the braille books and supplies for legally blind children registered through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction will provide some of the needed braille books and supplies. (See apprendix)

Some blind children have a physical condition that makes it impossible for them to attend a public day or residential school. If the child's problems are not sufficiently great to classify him as multiply handicapped and the school can obtain the service of a qualified teacher of the blind, it may provide home instruction for such a child and receive reimbursement for it through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

TRANSPORTATION AND TUITION

TUITION

If a child, residing in one district attends a special class in another district, it is necessary that tuition be paid by the district of residence.

In Section 12-24 of the School Code, the pattern is set as follows: "If a child, resident of one school district, because of his handicap attends a class or school for any such type of children in another school district, the school district in which he resides **shall** grant the proper permit, provide any necessary transportation and pay to the school district maintaining the special educational facilities the per capita cost of educating such children."

Certain factors must be included in figuring the per capita cost. First, the cost of conducting and maintaining any special educational facility shall be determined. This shall include the following expenses applicable only to such educational facility under rules and regulations established by and upon forms provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction:

1. Salaries of teachers, professional workers, clerks, librarians, custodial employees, and any district taxes specifically for their pension and retirement benefits
2. Educational supplies and equipment, including textbooks
3. Administrative costs and communication

4. Operation of physical plant including heat, light, water, repairs, and maintenance

5. Auxiliary services, not including any transportation cost

From such total cost thus determined, there shall be deducted the state reimbursement due on account of such educational facility for the same year, not including any state reimbursement for special education transportation. Such net cost shall be divided by the average number of pupils in average daily attendance in such special education facility for the school year in order to arrive at the net per capita tuition cost.

Any written agreement regarding tuition between a district of residence and a district conducting the class should be made prior to the date of beginning of such service.

TRANSPORTATION

It is often necessary that the district make special provisions in regard to transportation of exceptional children. Some children may require no extra consideration. Some will use regular means of transportation such as school buses or public transportation facilities, or the parents will assume the responsibility.

In other cases special arrangements will be necessary. The child may be unable to use the above facilities safely. He may not be able to wait at a crossroad or street corner or board a bus. He may live very far from the school and/or in an area not served by ordinary means of transportation. The district should formulate a policy in regard to meeting the transportation needs.

No agency other than a public school district can receive reimbursement for transportation. Reimbursement for transportation may be provided up to one-half the cost not to exceed $400 per eligible child annually when:

1. The local school district files an Application for Conditional Pre-Approval for Transportation Only with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the beginning of the service.
2. The district files a claim for reimbursement at the end of the school year.

Such transportation costs shall be limited to expenditure items other than the cost of acquiring equipment, interest, rent of facilities, and depreciation. No reimbursement can be made to any district unless it can present cancelled vouchers to show that the expenditures have been made by it.

Districts are advised of the importance of making contracts with transporting agencies, such as taxi and bus companies, as a means not only of insuring good service but of protecting the district in case of negligence or accidents or failure to be properly insured. In any type of transportation legal regulations as to safety, liability, and driver responsibility must be observed. By law, for example, all drivers paid by the local school district to transport children must have chauffeur's licenses.

When a blind child living in a district maintaining a special program needs to have transportation, his school district shall provide it and may receive reimbursement described above.

If a blind child, resident of one school district because of his handicap attends a special program in another school district, the school district in which

he resides **shall** provide any necessary transportation. This is equally true if the child attends a program maintained in a teacher-training center supported by public funds or a state institution of higher learning. Reimbursement may be obtained according to the foregoing procedure.

If one district provides the special transportation for children resident of two or more districts, a joint-agreement should be made in writing and approved by all districts concerned. The district providing the transportation in such cases will be the only district to make an Application For Conditional Pre-Approval for Transportation Only and will be the district to make claim for reimbursement.

If the service for blind children is established on an itinerant teacher plan, no state reimbursement for teacher-travel is provided. This must be taken into account in local planning for such service in a similar manner to that used for supervisors and other school personnel who travel from one school to another within a system.

CURRICULUM

Since public school programs advocate full participation of the blind child with his sighted peers, he follows the regular school curriculum. The necessary adaptations and adjustments to the curriculum are mainly in the areas of special equipment, development of special skills, and adjustment problems arising from lack of sight. The teacher of blind children must try to bring all of the areas of curriculum into focus for the child. When at all possible, she brings the objects into his immediate environment and within his touch.

She is responsible for helping him acquire the skills necessary to master the subject matter and for teaching him to handle the special equipment, such as the braillewriter, that he will need to use in most areas of the curriculum. For example, she will teach him both braille reading and writing and later touch typing. She will show him how to work arithmetic problems on the braillewriter and with the use of other devices, she will guide him in the use of audio aids, and often arrange necessary reader service for him.

Through conferences and cooperative work with the classroom teacher and other school personnel she will know where to carry out an individualized enrichment program for him in such areas as arts and crafts, physical education, and recreation and how to help him gain fuller personal independence as well as share in participation in school activities. This implies the help she will give the blind child in orientation to his environment. Formalized orientation will

be given to older children as the need arises. She will also have to give him help to gain social competency. Both are of prime importance in the development of a well adjusted blind individual.

There will be individual blind children who must have the concentrated special help of the trained teacher of the blind before they acquire a readiness for any great amount of participation with their sighted classmates. The special teacher will plan for this when the combined findings of the school personnel and a qualified psychological examiner indicate need of this type.

Besides the actual teaching of the blind child that will enable him to progress in the regular school curriculum, the special teacher will be diligent in her effort to supply all necessary equipment and devices that are truly helpful, but will avoid the use of gadgets of no real value and service to the child. In addition to materials that may be procured, she will devise other materials that will enable the child to participate in drill work, in the use of workbook material, and in other techniques that are being used in the regular classroom.

THE PROGRAM AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

The foregoing applies to work with all school age children but at the secondary level the problems of concern are peculiar to the age group and must be considered. If the teacher is qualified to teach at the secondary level, her training has provided her with a knowledge of the adolescent, the subject matter required, and the manner in which secondary schools function. She will find that helping the blind pupil presents some variations but is quite similar to helping the sighted one of like age and ability.

The teacher will encourage and help the blind student to make his own decisions and, in addition to the assistance from her, arrange for the help he needs through other resources. She will encourage him to have close contacts with school counselors, home room teachers, club sponsors, and others, thereby using the services available to all students. At the same time, she will stand ready to help him and the school personnel when blindness seems to be the root of a problem. This is the age when the child may need the most skillful interpretation of his particular visual loss.

The special teacher will expect those pupils who have received training at the elementary level to have mastered the use of braille and special equipment and, to an extent, be able to work independently when she provides the necessary materials for them. As at the elementary level, however, there will be pupils who have recently lost sight and must learn the skills and the use of equipment for the first time. Some may have had a long period of absence due to the eye condition and will need help in making up lost work at the same time that they are acquiring a new approach to learning. Like all other pupils, blind children will have great variation in their abilities and readiness for work at the secondary level. Limited native endowment, an illness, or a difficult educational placement may mean that a child will need much more of the special teacher's time than would normally be expected. She will need to consider the pupil's study habits, the advisability of providing reader service, the educational level at which he is functioning, reading material with which the pupil can work, and the extent of his need for tutoring.

Adequate counseling service is a necessity for the blind pupil at the secondary level. The special

teacher must know the effectiveness of the school's counseling service and use it accordingly. Hopefully she may take a secondary role, working closely with the counselors, sharing her understanding and knowledge of resources for the blind, and of the pupil's abilities and his aptitudes. Often she can relieve the pupil's and his family's stresses and concern over his future by helping form a positive vocational plan.

She will recognize the need of the pupil and his family for information about a possible career. Her knowledge of vocational opportunities based upon realistic success of blind people will be shared with the pupil and his family.

She will assist in the orientation of the staff of guidance and counseling, psychological service, and others that may contribute in wise planning. Then, she will be able to obtain the best possible help from the school staff and call upon the most effective resources outside the school for vocational planning.

For an effective vocational guidance program the school should include the following suggestions in its plan.

1. Help the blind student gain the ability to select a realistic goal by judging his competence.
2. Share with him and his family possible opportunities for him based upon his interest and abilities.
3. Prepare and keep current a file of information on the pupil's aptitudes, interest, and abilities.
4. Arrange for a representative of Vocational Rehabilitation to meet the blind pupil as early as possible and then, if this service is indicated, encourage a rapport that will enable

the representative to be of the greatest help to the pupil.

5. Arrange meetings between the school and Vocational Rehabilitation personnel at frequent intervals to interpret, plan, and move toward a worthwhile goal through such steps as

   a. choice of academic work

   b. exploration of and experience in summer work

   c. improvement, if necessary, in social contacts, mobility, greater self reliance

   d. provision of background information to familiarize the student with the course of action, customs, and expectations in the area of work he desires (i.e. college, followed by a professional or business career, work situations)

6. Share information as to scholarships for higher education and other avenues for training besides those offered through Vocational Rehabilitation.

7. Interest the community in plans for its blind pupils.

CASE RECORDS

Detailed and documented case records should be prepared and kept current in the locked files of the teacher of blind children.

Proper and professional sharing of confidential material in the interest of the child is a responsibility of the school. Records, therefore, should be used and shared with those individuals and agencies who work on a professional basis with the child and/or his family. With careful evaluation and interpretation such records will be invaluable in assessing needs and planning for the child.

Records should include such information as the following:

I. Social History

A. Name, address, phone, sex, birthdate, grade, school

B. Parent's or guardian's name, address, occupation, language

C. List of siblings and ages

D. Home environment — economic status; marital status of parents; parental and sibling, neighborhood, and associates' attitudes toward the student

I. Ocular and Medical Records

A. Name of examining eye specialist

B. Date of examination

C. Results of examination—eye condition, onset of blindness, other physical envolvements, prognosis

D. The eye specialist's directions as to the procedure to be followed by the teacher in care of the student's eyes

E. Health history, including results of physical examination, hearing tests, speech development

III. Psychological and Education Records

A. Records of the circumstances, results and interpretations of all tests including intelligence, aptitude, personality, achievement, and reading

B. Scholastic records and school attendance

C. Teacher's annual summary of child's progress

IV. Adjustment Record

A. General behavior

B. Attitude toward parents, siblings, friends, classmates, teachers

C. Out-of-school activities

V. Guidance Records

A. Notes concerning home visits and conferences with parents

B. Records of conferences with teachers, counselors, doctors, and students

C. Record of vocational plans and work experiences

D. Records of any social maladjustment studies and the agencies involved

E. Follow-up records

VI. Miscellaneous

A. Correspondence

B. Pertinent samples of student's work

TRANSFERS AND RELEASES

TRANSFERS—Transfers should be given careful consideration since it is often a hardship for a child to be moved from one program to another. From time to time, however, it may be necessary for pupils to be transferred from room to room within a school, from one school to another within the district, from district to district or from one state to another. It is the responsibility of the local administrator to establish the simple policies and procedures which will enable the transfer to be made with ease. When a transfer is to be made within a local school district, the school administrator should call a conference of personnel from the schools involved as well as the parents.

When a child is transferring from one school district to another, it is important that the new district receive in advance all information regarding the child. It is desirable that this information be shared in a conference with the school personnel of both districts and that school records be transferred insofar as possible.

RELEASE—A release by the district in which the child resides should be issued before he is enrolled in a special program elsewhere.

HOME-SCHOOL COOPERATION

A child is the responsibility of his parents but as he grows and develops the responsibility must be shared by the school and community. When he is ready for school, a close and friendly coordination of effort between the school personnel and parents will mean much toward the child's successful educational progress.

The aim of every good teacher is to understand the child with whom she is working. Knowing his environmental background, the type of home from which he comes and the emotional and economic security it provides gives her greater knowledge of him. What the school can do for the child is dependent to a large extent upon what the home has already done and is continuing to do.

Parents need to discuss their problems, which may be greatly increased due to the child's having a visual loss, and the school needs to interpret its philosophy and procedures to the parents and be a resource upon which they may call. Since the child's development and learning comes from the efforts of both the school and home, a uniformity of approach and a supplementing of endeavor will provide a desired level of educational, social, and emotional competence.

Good relations between the home and school result from understanding goals and having a mutual respect, coupled with the recognition of the fact that it is an advantage for the school and home to work together. Teachers should visit in the homes of their pupils and parents should visit the classrooms of their

children. Conferences between parents and teachers should be planned, but not preclude less formal visiting. A relaxed visit in the home may afford an opportunity for questions and discussion that would be awkward and/or undesirable in a more formal planned setting such as a school conference. This does not infer that the teachers and parents should develop a personal friendship that will infringe upon professional relationships.

There should be a minimum of three parent-teacher conferences yearly, preferably at the opening of school, at mid-year, and near the close of the school year. These conferences should be summarized and filed for future reference.

Obviously, if the skills which contribute to the child's growth and development are to be built and strengthened, there must be a shared responsibility and coordinated effort on the part of the home and school.

APPENDIX

STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN ESTABLISHING PROGRAMS

The law sets a pattern by which school districts may meet the educational needs of children with visual difficulties. The school district carries the responsibility for establishing special programs since the legislation is permissive and the district is the only agency that can be reimbursed under the law.

A logical sequence of steps must be taken to establish a successful program for blind children.

1. Identify eligible children through the annual school census for exceptional children taken by the County Superintendents of Schools, Child Welfare Division of the Department of Public Welfare, parents of the blind organizations, research and/or study projects on the blind, and other sources that may be available locally.
2. Request the consultative service of the Division of Special Education of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
3. Determine the type of program best suited for the locale.
4. Prepare the school and community for the program.
5. Decide the age and grade range that the school system can serve adequately.
6. Select a person to be administratively responsible.

7. Secure a qualified teacher.
8. Have psychological examination.
9. Select pupils for enrollment.
10. Determine admissions and release policies.
11. Arrange for tuition pupils with their local school districts.
12. Provide for physical arrangements.
13. Orient building staff.
14. Establish system of record keeping.
15. Order equipment and supplies.
16. Arrange for transportation for pupils within the district or for special teacher if itinerant teacher program is to be established.
17. Establish parent education programs.

SUGGESTED SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT FOR A PROGRAM FOR BLIND CHILDREN

Equipment and supplies needed will vary according to the age group to be served, the resources within the school, and the type of program established. Obviously there are certain essentials since a blind child must have the tools to compensate for lack of sight. These include:

Braille writers
Braille paper
Typewriters for older children
Record player with headphones
Tape recorder with headphones for older children
Talking book reproducer for older children
Slate and stylus for older children
Adjustable desks with sufficiently large tops
Various aids for subject matter

The following list should be considered only as a guide and to simplify checking is broken into groupings by school levels. For a more complete list see "Resources for Teachers of Blind with Sighted Children", compiled by Georgie Lee Abel, Educational Series Number 9, American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.

1. For the pre-school and kindergarten child
   Materials are the same as for sighted children and include such things as:

   Record player and records
   Building blocks

Slide
Jungle gym
Rocking boat
Puzzles
Beads
Toys

2. For primary grade children

Many items are the same as for sighted children and include such things as:

Toys and games
Peg boards (large and small)
Geometric puzzles
Form boards
Color cones
Beads to string
Record player and records
Blocks and other large objects for counting
Ruler and yardstick
Clock with hands
Clock face that may be brailled
Abacus
Fraction pies

Other items are designed more specifically for the blind child or are chosen for their particular usefulness to him.

Braille books (corresponding to the inkprint books used in regular class)
Inkprint copies for the teacher
Braille word cards

3. For intermediate grade children

Tape recorder with headphones and portable table
Talking book with headphones and portable table
Educational tapes

Typewriters and typing tables and chairs
Typewriting course (recorded and inkprint)
Typing pad and paper
Relief globe
Braille maps (continents, countries, and sections of countries)
Dictionary
Hoff Aid
Geometric figures and graphic aids for mathematics
Slates (pocket and desk size), styli
Script writing aids
Games:
- Checkers
- Bingo
- Playing Cards
- Arithmetic games
- Dominoes

4. For pupils at the secondary level

Tape or other type recorder with headphones and portable table
Educational tapes
Talking book with headphones and portable table
Typewriters, typing tables, and chairs
Slates (pocket and desk size), styli
Mathematics equipment such as:
- Draughtman's compass
- Protractor
- Slide rule
- Graphic aid for mathematics
- Mitchell wire forms
- Foot rule, etc.
- Maps
- Sewing aids
- Biological models

Many useful items may be obtained from distributors and manufacturers of toys, school supplies, audio aids. Specialized equipment and supplies may be obtained from the following companies:

American Printing House for the Blind
1839 Frankfort Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky

American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.
15 West 16th Street
New York 11, New York

Braille Institute of America
741 North Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles 29, California

Howe Press
Watertown 72, Massachusetts

FEDERAL FUNDS TO PROMOTE THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND

Since 1879 funds have been available from the Federal government to promote the education of the blind through furnishing educational books and supplies. Money is allocated to the American Printing House for the Blind for production of materials and this organization supplies them through a quota system to schools educating blind children.

To determine quota each state submits an annual report to the American Printing House for the Blind. Using forms provided and attaching verification of legal blindness, each public school annually reports to the Department of Public Instruction the legally blind children enrolled on the first Monday in January. The Department of Public Instruction then compiles for the American Printing House for the Blind a report of all legally blind children enrolled in the public schools of the state.

When the Department is notified of the state quota which is dependent upon the number of children registered, it informs each public school of its portion for the coming school year.

Since the American Printing House for the Blind deals directly with the State Department, all orders from quota must be sent from the local school to the State Department for transmittal. Even though the State Department maintains records on the quota, it is wise for each school to check its own portion to be sure that it uses its full amount to advantage and yet does not overdraw.

GLOSSARY

A medical ocular blank should give the school district information regarding the child's visual defect. The form used in the public day schools of Illinois may be obtained from the Division of Special Education, Department of Public Instruction, 1130 South Sixth Street, Springfield, Illinois.

The special teacher's ability to read the medical data on the blank enables her to understand the child's visual problem and helps her in planning the best program for him. She must be trained to read the ocular findings in their totality and to understand the visual terms used by the eye doctor. The following definitions will enable the readers to interpret terminology in this circular and on ocular report blanks.

Albinism—A congenital and hereditary deficiency of pigment; usually associated with lowered visual acuity, nystagmus, and photophobia and often accompanied by refractive errors.

Amblyopia—Poor vision without any apparent pathology of the eye.

Amblyopia Ex Anopsia—Poor vision due to disuse of the eye. (See Suppression Amblyopia)

Aniridia—Congenital absence of the iris.

Anophthalmos—Absence of a true eyeball.

Aphakia—Absence of the lens of the eye.

Astigmatism—Refractive error which prevents the light rays from coming to a single focus because of different degrees of refraction in the various meridians of the eye.

Blepharitis—Inflammation of the margin of the eyelids.

Buphthalmus—Large eyeball (infantile glaucoma).

Cataract—A condition in which the crystalline lens of the eye, or its capsule, or both, become opaque with consequent reduction in visual acuity.

Choroiditis—Inflammation of the choroid.

Coloboma—Congenital cleft due to the failure of the eye to complete growth in the part affected.

Cyclitis—Inflammation of the ciliary body.

Enucleation—Complete surgical removal of the eye ball.

Esotropia—A manifest turning inward of the eye (convergent strabismus or crossed eye).

Exophoria—A tendency of the eye to turn outward.

Exophthalmus—Abnormal protrusion of the eyeball.

Exotropia—Abnormal turning outward from the nose of one or both eyes (divergent starbismus).

Eye Doctor—A term used in this circular for the purpose of brevity referring to both ophthalmologists and optometrists although it is well understood that optometrists do not refer to themselves as "eye doctors."

Field of Vision—The entire area which can be seen without shifting the gaze.

Glaucoma—Increased interocular tension of the eye (hardening of the eyeball).

Glioma—Malignant tumor of the retina.

Hemianopsia—Blindness of one-half the field of vision of one or both eyes.

Heterophoria—A constant tendency of the eyes to deviate from the normal axis counterbalanced by simultaneous fixation forced by muscular effort (prompted by

the desire for single binocular vision). Deviation is not usually apparent, hence, is said to be "latent."

Hyperopia—A refractive error in which, because the eyeball is short, or the refractive power of the lens weak, the point of focus for rays of light from distant objects (parallel light rays) is behind the retina; thus accommodation to increase the refractive power of the lens is necessary for distant, as well as near vision. (Farsightedness)

Interstitial Keratitis—Affection of the middle layer of the cornea (substantia propria); disease found chiefly in children and young adults; is usually caused by transmission of syphilis from mother to unborn child.

Intraocular Tension—The pressure or tension of the contents of the eye ball.

Iridocyclitis—Inflammation of the iris and ciliary body.

Iritis—Inflammation of the iris; the condition is marked by pain, congestion in the ciliary region, photophobia, contraction of pupil, discoloration of iris and is caused by injury, syphilis, rheumatism, gonorrhea, tuberculosis, etc.

Jaeger Test—A test for near vision; lines of reading matter printed in a series of various sizes of type.

Keratitis—Inflammation of the cornea; frequently classified as to type of inflammation and layers of cornea affected as "interstitial" keratitis or "phlyctenular" keratitis.

Legal Blindness—The following definition of blindness has been adopted for use in the State of Illinois: "In terms of ophthalmic measurement, central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses is considered economic blindness. A peripheral field loss in which the visual field efficiency is reduced to 30 per cent or less may be considered

equally disabling, as may certain ocular conditions which do not necessarily involve visual acuity or peripheral field loss but which constitute a severe visual handicap."

Macrophthalmous—Abnormally large eyeball, resulting usually from infantile glaucoma.

Megalophthalmus—Abnormally large eyeball, resulting usually from infantile glaucoma.

Microphthalmus—Eyeball congenitally abnormally small in all its meridians.

Myopia—A refractive error in which, because the eyeball is too long, the point of focus for rays of light from distant objects (parallel light rays) is in front of the retina; thus to obtain distinct vision, the object must be brought nearer to take advantage of divergent light rays (those from objects less than twenty feet away). (Nearsightedness)

Nystagmus—An involuntary, rapid movement of the eyeball, it may be lateral, vertical, rotary or mixed.

Oculist or Ophthalmologist—A doctor of medicine who is a specialist in the diseases and defects of the eye, and whose work includes refractive errors and the prescribing of glasses.

Optician—One skilled in the art and science of grinding lenses and/or other optical instruments and who fills prescriptions for glasses.

Optometrist—One who is skilled in refraction and analysis of the visual function and prescribes glasses and/or visual training for its correction or improvement.

Ophthalmia—Inflammation of the eye or of the conjunctiva.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum—An acute, purulent conjunctivitis in the new born; (for control purposes, it is

sometimes legally defined as "an inflamed or discharging eye in a new born baby under two weeks").

Optic Atrophy—Atrophy of the optic nerve.

Optic Neuritis—Inflammation of the optic nerve.

Peripheral Vision—Ability to perceive the presence, motion, or color of objects outside the direct line of vision.

Phlyctenular Keratitis—A variety of keratitis characterized by the formation of postules or papules on the cornea; usually occurs in young children and may be caused by poor nutrition. Many physicians believe it to be a tubercular condition.

Retinal Detachment—A separation of the retina from the choroid.

Retinitis—Inflammation of the retina; it is marked by impairment of sight, perversion of vision, edema and exudation into the retina and occasionally by hemorrhages into the retina.

Retrolental Fibroplasia—A disease of the retina in which a mass of scar tissue forms back of the lens of the eye. Both eyes are affected in most cases and it occurs chiefly in premature infants who received an excessive amount of oxygen.

Scotoma—A blind or partially blind area in the visual field.

Strabismus—Squint; failure of the two eyes to direct their gaze at the same object because of muscle imbalance.

Suppression-Amblyopia—Reduction of vision due to disuse.

Sympathetic Ophthalmia—Inflammation of one eye due to an infection in the other eye (usually traumatic iridocyclitis from a perforating injury.)

Trachoma—A chronic form of infectious conjunctivitis, which may also seriously affect other parts of the eye.

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